

Journey Through The Postpartum Phase Experiences of First Time Fathers in Malaysia

Nurathirah Noorahim, Joo Siang Tan

School of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi
Malaysia, Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: joosiang@utm.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i4/21175>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i4/21175

Published Date: 12 April 2024

Abstract

This research provides an in-depth exploration of the varied obstacles and support systems encountered by novice fathers in Malaysia after childbirth. Adopting a phenomenological research approach, the investigation interacted with 10 first-time fathers residing in Malaysia. The participant selection was driven by purposive sampling. The data was solely collected through semi-structured interviews, enabling a thorough examination of the participants' lived experiences. The results unearth an assortment of hurdles experienced by first-time fathers, moving beyond monetary obligations to include emotional and societal aspects. These hurdles are intensified by social norms and the limitations of current support structures. These revelations emphasize the demand for a multi-dimensional strategy to strengthen the support framework for new fathers. Moreover, they offer key perspectives that could inform the construction of focused policies and community activities to cultivate a better support system for first-time fathers during the postnatal period. Consequently, this research acts as a seminal resource for subsequent studies on fatherly experiences and support resources during initial parenthood.

Keywords: Postpartum Phase, First-Time Fathers, Malaysian Context.

Introduction

The metamorphosis into fatherhood marks a significant evolution in the life of a man who affects him in both a psychological manner, socially, and in a biological manner. Recent exploration has focused on how first-time father fluctuates between classic and contemporary fatherly responsibilities; demanding yet flexible recognition of manly virtues. In this way, both strategies influence their participation in paternal care and their working life (Lewington et al., 2021). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the paternal experience, heightening stress related to gender roles while also encouraging more active participation in prenatal and postnatal care due to increased opportunities for remote work (Fonseca et al., 2023). The journey to fatherhood involves a series of stages, from the initial decision to father a child, through moments of uncertainty, to adapting to new responsibilities

and eventually finding stability, as outlined in a recent grounded theory study (Vidaurreta et al., 2022). Understanding these varied experiences is crucial for developing health and social policies that better support men during this significant life transition.

Transition to fatherhood, especially postpartum, is a critical stage for new fathers, characterized by emotional changes and new responsibilities. With much research already conducted on maternal postpartum depression, a lot of attention has started being awarded to paternal perinatal depression. It has been recorded as affecting approximately a quarter of new fathers, thus is a major concern (Chavis, 2022). The aftermaths of PPNP could be damaging like weak father-child bonding, high potential for drug misuse, and even the child's possible experience with longterm emotional or behavioral problems (Pinar & Ozbek, 2022). The emotional landscape at this time is complex and can be influenced by a number of factors, including the status of couples' relationships and any presence of psychosocial stressors. Undoubtedly, understanding these emotional progressions would be of supreme importance in making inclusive, family-centered care strategies that look to increase the available support for new fathers passing through this arduous journey of life (Chavis, 2022; Pinar & Ozbek, 2022).

Entering fatherhood is a transformative adventure, profoundly impacting the welfare of the family. The needs of first-time fathers during the initial postnatal period often remain unmet, indicating a significant need for interventions that assist in their transition into fatherhood (Shorey et al., 2017). Financial stability is undeniably crucial in the context of impending fatherhood, suggesting the inclusion of financial counseling within reproductive healthcare services as a vital strategy (Hamm et al., 2018). Societal norms often burden fathers with the expectation of becoming the family's financial pillar (Riggs (1997), a role that goes beyond providing fundamental necessities and encompasses budgeting for baby necessities, healthcare, and potential employment shifts. There lies an opportunity for policymakers and healthcare providers to devise and refine policies that could aid and support fathers in their monetary responsibilities (Castillo et al., 2011). It is thus pivotal to understand the financial aspects for first-time fathers, as this understanding is vital not just for the fathers themselves but for the entire family's wellbeing.

Fatherhood is a landmark event in the life of a man; it imposes a lot of challenges and, at the same time, requires a surplus of social support. Among all, the postnatal period is very important, and it should be given maximum attention among health care professionals and policy framers for a novice father like in Malaysia. Research findings have indicated that new fathers generally have unmet support needs in the early postnatal period, and meeting these needs may lead to a more seamless transition into new fatherhood (Shorey et al., 2017). Social support is also very important for enabling new parents, new fathers, to have a protective buffer against psychological tension when it comes to becoming a parent (Hughes et al., 2020). Nevertheless, there are no social supports that are complete enough for first-time fathers, which include the three mentioned informational, emotional, and a sense of belonging either (Kim, 2018). This is why understanding and improving the social support mechanism for first-time fathers in Malaysia is important for their mental and emotional wellbeing.

The transition to first-time fatherhood is multifaceted, complex, and a topic that has been extensively studied. However, scholarly literature significantly lacks insight into the experiences of first-time fathers within the unique cultural and societal context of Malaysia. Some studies have explored the postnatal experiences and support needs of new fathers in general Shorey et al (2017), but lacked to address the influence of distinct cultural and social dynamics that shape fatherhood in Malaysia. Challenges persist in fathering research, including ensuring a comprehensive and consistent inclusion of fathers, enhancing assessment methodologies, and refining data analysis techniques (Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020). This research gap is critical, as an in-depth understanding of the experiences of first-time fathers in Malaysia could have significant implications for stakeholders influencing healthcare policies, service providers, and professionals engaged in the planning and delivery of services to new parents (Baldwin et al., 2019). Consequently, there is an immediate and pressing need for research specifically designed to explore and understanding the experiences of first-time fathers in Malaysia.

The transitioning journey to fatherhood is substantially influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations, particularly in a culturally rich country like Malaysia. These factors profoundly shape the postnatal experiences of novice fathers. Although previous research has explored the broad experiences and support needs of first-time fathers Shorey et al (2017), there is a notable gap in understanding how specific Malaysian cultural norms and societal expectations affect these new fathers. Cultural doctrines surrounding fatherhood, coupled with the fathers' personal perceptions, significantly influence their real-time parenting behavior (Shorey & Ang, 2019). Additionally, the role of the extended family and the community in providing support has been largely overlooked. This gap is significant because a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social context can illuminate the unique challenges and support mechanisms for first-time fathers in Malaysia (Jackson et al., 2003).

The journey of becoming a father is multifaceted and replete with significant decisions. Academic research to date has illuminated various dimensions of first-time fatherhood, including emotional transformations Gross & Marcussen (2017) economic impacts Hamm et al (2018), and the function of social support networks (Shorey et al., 2017). However, there remains a significant gap in research focused on first-time fathers in Malaysia. This study seeks to address this deficiency by exploring the emotional adjustments, financial considerations, and social support frameworks specifically designed for first-time fathers in Malaysia during the postnatal period. Understanding these aspects is crucial for healthcare policymakers, service providers, and professionals involved in the design and delivery of services to novice parents (Baldwin et al., 2019).

Methodology

This qualitative study used a phenomenological research design to delve intensive into the lived experiences of first-time fathers (Cohen et al., 2001; Toye et al., 2016). A strategic selection of ten participants was accomplished using a purposive sampling methodology, with the objective of acquiring data that was rich in context and significance (Palinkas et al., 2015). The study's geographical breadth was extended to encompass diverse regions across Malaysia, adding to the depth and contextual richness of the research (Flick, 2022). Data was meticulously collected via semi-structured interviews carried out on secure online platforms,

thus preserving the personal touch traditionally associated with face to face interactions (Janghorban et al., 2014). The collected data was meticulously subjected to a comprehensive thematic exploration, adhering strictly to the protocol outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of organizing the data was systematically conducted using the robust Atlati.24 software. The researcher transcribed all interviews verbatimly, re-read and compared them, in order to retain the interviews' meaning. Then, to summarise the data from the interviews, the researcher concentrated by doing the coding selection process using the software. To uphold the authenticity and trustworthiness of the study, a robust validation technique was employed lead to better understanding and at the same time preserve the study's discovery. This strategy encompassed peer assessments, validation from participants, and consultations with domain experts (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Results

The table offers an exhaustive set of demographic data focused on a cohort of nascent fathers, all hailing from a uniform cultural and religious landscape – specifically Malay Muslim. These fathers span a diverse range of ages, with the most youthful being 26 and the most senior at a ripe age of 42 years Their educational accomplishments depict an impressive range, spanning from the minimum requirement of high school to the highest distinction of Master's degrees. The variation in their monthly incomes is also noteworthy, extending from a modest RM 2000 to a more substantial RM 4000. Professionally, these fathers are engaged in an array of roles that showcase their diverse skills and expertise from the dynamic sphere of entrepreneurship to more structured technical and managerial vocations. Geographically, the majority of these fathers, precisely 70%, are residents of urban areas, showcasing an inclination towards city life, while a smaller segment, the remaining 30%, still retain their roots in the tranquility of rural settings. Drawing from the analysis outcomes, the postpartum journey of new fathers unraveled three pivotal themes.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Education Level	Monthly Income (RM)	Occupation	Housing Area
PK 1	30	Bachelor's	4000	Restaurant Entrepreneur	Urban
PK 2	33	Master's	3000	Craftsman Entrepreneur	Urban
PK 3	36	Diploma	4000	Store Supervisor	Rural
PK 4	30	Bachelor's	2000-2700	Private	Urban
PK 5	32	Diploma	2000	Freelancer	Urban
PK 6	33	Highschool	3300	Technician	Rural
PK 7	26	Diploma	2200	Assistant Manager	Urban
PK 8	42	Master's	4000	Executive	Rural
PK 9	28	Vocational Certificate	3000	Cook	Urban
PK 10	34	Master's	4000	Lab Manager	Urban

Theme 1: Learning and Adapting

In the postpartum period, each day presents a learning curve filled with new tasks such as changing diapers, feeding at midnight, and singing lullabies. Alongside these tasks, the new father experiences a rollercoaster of emotions triggered by this profound life change. He becomes quite adept at understanding his baby's cries, each indicating different needs, whether for comfort, food, or just a bit of affection. Adjusting to the lack of sleep can be challenging, especially since both parents were used to more regular schedules before the baby's arrival. Despite these challenges, this period strengthens his resilience and nurtures his capacity for empathy and patience. The following text offers an enlightening conversation with a new dad, sharing insights from his journey of learning and adaptation during the postnatal phase.

"In terms of child management, to me, it's not a matter of whether we are men or women. Because I want my child to be close to me. My child is a boy, and if I'm not close to him, I'm afraid that there will be a large gap as he grows up. I'm worried he'll lean more towards his friends. So, I'm trying to balance my time. Whether my child needs to go to the toilet or needs a bath, I'll manage all of that. Because I want him, from a young age, to have the scent of his father, so to speak....."

3:22 pp 4 – 5 in PK2 -New Father

"For us here at PERODUA, we get a two day compassionate leave, and when my wife gives birth, I get an additional three days of compassionate leave. So, I took a total of five days off. But, I took additional leave because I had to commute back and forth to the hospital to visit my wife and child. Additionally, I had to take care of the baby's umbilical cord. When I was handling the cord, my mother-in-law was the only one present. She guided me on how to clean and take care of it....."

16:40 pp 8 – 9 in PK8-New Father

The narrative of the father's journey emphasizes the critical importance of gaining access to guidance during the postnatal period. It is vital for new parents to have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and adjust to the fresh responsibilities that accompany the arrival of a newborn. In this particular instance, the support and counsel offered by the extended family notably the mother in law proved to be a crucial factor in guiding the father on how to cater to his baby's umbilical cord care. This experience emphasizes the pivotal role that family can play in providing pragmatic support and advice during this transformative phase. Moreover, it accentuates the urgency for adaptive workplace policies that permit fathers to avail additional leave for familial obligations, thus facilitating their active involvement in the early life of their child.

"When my child just got back from the hospital, it was mainly my wife who took care of him. I was afraid that I might be too coarse, I was scared to bathe my child. But at that time, I watched how my wife bathed our child. I learned little by little. Not long after, I took over the responsibility to bathe the child. To prepare the baby's milk, because I also had no experience, I didn't know much about taking care of children. It was a new experience for me. I learnt a lot from my wife."

8:58 pp 9 – 10 in PK8-New Father

The excerpt that could be explained in this situation is "learning and adapting to new roles". The new father is initially hesitant and fearful of handling his newborn, concerned about being too rough due to his lack of experience. However, he observes his wife caring for their child and gradually learns from her. He begins to take on responsibilities such as bathing the baby and preparing the milk, despite his initial apprehensions. This shows his commitment to overcoming his fears and adapting to his new role as a father. It emphasizes the importance of shared responsibility in parenthood, as well as the willingness to learn and grow from one's experiences.

Theme 2: Dedication and Commitment

*"At that time, I was staying in the hospital because I wanted to take care of my wife and child. So, I used the hospital ward for all my needs like bathing and resting, as it was a two person room, so there were no issues when I needed to use the bathroom. Everyone understood. **The distance from home to the hospital was only 3 to 5 km, but I didn't feel like going home.** I took leave from work at that time because I wanted to take care of my wife and child at the hospital. I was indeed tired and exhausted, but I was happy and didn't feel it as a burden. Even though the house wasn't too far away, **I volunteered to stay in the hospital to accompany my wife and child.** Then, to me, there was no difference if I slept at home but my heart was at the hospital, it would be better for me to sleep at the (Prayer room) hospital."*

3:58 pp 4 – 5 in PK3 – New Father

The central theme from this passage emphasizes the father's unwavering dedication and commitment to his wife and newborn child. The father willingly relinquishes personal comfort and leisure, choosing instead to endure the sterile hospital ward environment with his budding family. Amidst a blend of fatigue and euphoria, he unveils the intricate emotional layers of nascent parenthood. Two notable subthemes emerge from this scenario. The primary subtheme is 'selflessness'. The father's voluntary decision to take a hiatus from work, his steadfast resolution to stay at the hospital irrespective of its closeness to his home, and his acceptance of the physical exhaustion that comes with familial care, all attest to this. The secondary subtheme is 'emotional attachment'. His choice to inhabit the hospital, despite his home's convenience, implies a deep seated emotional connection with his partner and newborn. This prioritization of physical presence in the hospital over his home's comfort indicates a deep emotional commitment to his newfound role as a father.

"coincidentally it's the school holiday, so I come every day. I arrive when visiting hours start, and I leave when they end. Then I return again. So, I always bring whatever my wife asks for. Or my mother will bring food, or I will bring it. But if I'm bringing items or anything, I don't bring a car, because I know the traffic is congested. So, I just bring my motorbike."

4:116 p 6 in PK4 – New Father

The father exemplifies commitment and support by persisting in his daily visits during school holidays, regardless of the road congestion. He chooses to forego the comfort of his car and instead rides his motorbike, guaranteeing he can be there for his wife and newborn. The new father's dedication and assistance during the postnatal phase was exceptional.

"At that time, I had already taken leave, only for a week though. Just delivered meals. There was time to visit in the morning and the evening."

This narrative centers around the unfaltering commitment and assistance offered by a new father during the postpartum phase of his spouse. Despite being tied up with personal and professional responsibilities, he set aside a week to provide crucial support during this sensitive period. He dutifully prepared meals for his spouse, ensuring she was well nourished and cared for. Moreover, he dedicated time in the mornings and evenings to be with his spouse, showcasing his reliable presence and emotional reinforcement. This narrative emphasizes the meaningful themes of unselfish surrender, unwavering commitment, and deep seated affection, illuminating the father's steadfast dedication to support his partner through her postpartum period.

Theme 3: Staying Apart

“I indeed wanted my wife to have her confinement period at my mother's house, but my mother-in-law insisted on having her at her own house. If possible, I wouldn't want that, but I had to agree. She said that for the first child, she wants my wife to return to her house. My wife was okay with it, she accepted going back to her mother's house. Although I knew she had to have her confinement at my mother-in-law's house, it was something I couldn't bear.”

5:25 p 5 in PK3 – New Father

This excerpt is evident as the husband willingly agrees to let his wife recuperate at her mother's home following childbirth, despite his preference for her being at his mother's home. This decision demonstrates the husband's understanding, selflessness, and willingness to make a sacrifice for the sake of his wife's comfort and his in-laws' wishes. In the end, even though they have to live apart, he accepts this situation out of respect for his wife and her family's traditional practices

The findings indicated that there are three major postpartum experiences in the proses of becoming a first-time father: learning and adapting, dedication and commitment, and staying apart.

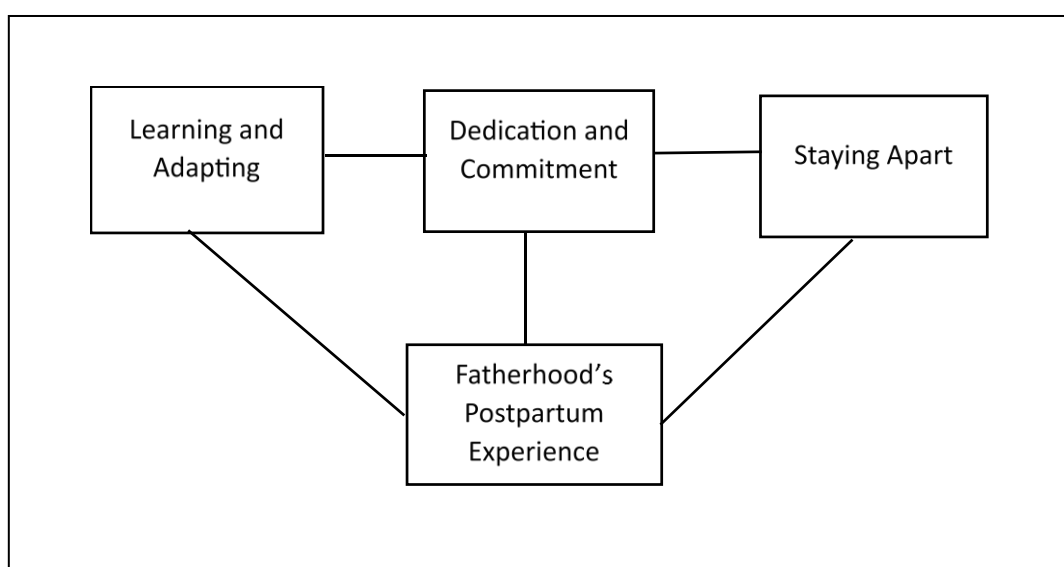


Figure 1: Fatherhood Postpartum Experience

Discussion

The narratives from fathers firmly emphasize the immediate necessity for a transformative, ensuring they are more attuned to their specific needs during the postnatal care period. This shift in focus is not merely about accommodation but about actively prioritizing their unique requirements, catering to their roles as new parents. This approach positions them not as secondary participants but as equally important contributors to the process of postnatal care. Implementing such changes will undoubtedly enhance the overall postnatal experience for fathers, encouraging greater engagement and involvement in the caregiving journey (Persson et al., 2012). Both narratives emphasize the intense desire of fathers to participate actively in the nurturing and care of their partners a desire that is frequently hindered by rigid hospital protocols. This emphasizes the urgency for a comprehensive reevaluation and modification of these rules to facilitate a more inclusive environment that embraces the unique needs of fathers during the postnatal period. By doing so, healthcare institutions can promote a greater sense of involvement, fostering a more balanced and supportive atmosphere for both the newborn and the mother (Deave & Johnson, 2008).

The first account brings to the fore the issue of hospital rules prohibiting fathers from staying overnight, even if they show willingness to avail improved facilities. The second account accentuates the emotional support fathers can extend during this period (Goodman, 2004). Amidst fatigue, the first-time father supports his wife, underscoring the crucial role that new fathers play in postnatal care. However, hospital policies prohibiting overnight stays act as significant obstacles for new fathers wishing to be fully engaged in this capacity. In these instances, such policies limit the participation of new fathers, highlighting overlooked opportunities for them to be more actively involved in the care of their partners and newborns. This discussion underscores the essential role of new fathers during the postnatal period. The caregiving system serves as the primary framework through which maternal-fetal relationships are established, characterized by providing care and protection. Extending this framework to include new fathers helps elucidate their roles and experiences during the postpartum period. Recognizing that new fathers also partake in caregiving activities providing care rather than seeking it can enhance the understanding of their emotional and psychological transitions. This perspective may also aid in developing support systems tailored to meet the unique needs of new fathers as they navigate their caregiving roles and responsibilities (Walsh, 2010). Conversely, another narrative portrays an active and engaged new father, suggesting the potential for redefining traditional gender roles. The decision of a new father to take additional leave from work signifies the importance of employment policies that support paternal involvement (Rehel, 2014)

Conclusion

The summarized expeditions and inquiries highlight the pressing need for social change and postnatal education, that will actively and effectively promote paternal participation within their caregiving roles. The first narrative underscores the gap that occurs when a father either is absent or indifferent to postnatal care, tracing social assumptions which often relegate care duty to women primarily. The second story is that of the opportunity for the reshaping of traditional gender relations, in which a father who is responsive and responsible benefits from the advice and support of the extended family. Policies at the workplace, such as extra leave, are important in facilitating paternal postnatal care. In the end, flexible workplace strategies, involvement of the extended family, and comprehensive healthcare provisions come to be

indispensable in the advocacy and empowerment of fathers during the postnatal stage. The need to raise and promote fatherly presence in the postnatal period is urgently underlined by contemporary stories and research. The stories reveal both the invisible and the fostered cases of fatherly involvement, pointing to the fact that society, as well as education, has to change at this crucial stage. The reports of amazing dedication and active participation of the fathers, despite the social norms and barriers, suggest a real change in parental roles. Also, there is a dire need for pointed programs and awareness among the providers to ensure the well-involvement of fathers during this critical period. The discussion highlights that the involvement of fathers may bring health advantages to the father himself, the mother, and the child. In the same line, workplace policies should encourage paternal engagement, extended family networks, and health care services inclusive of fathers. There is a need to guide new fathers, promote father-friendly policies in the workplace, father-friendly social networks, attending to the special needs of fathers, and policy change advocacy. These recommendations, when implemented, would serve to promote active fatherhood and overcome barriers to paternal involvement in postnatal care. Other recommendations include education on postnatal practices, policy change in lobbying for extended maternity and paternity leaves, and workplace child-care centers. By implementing these measures, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for new fathers, which ultimately contributes to the health and wellness of parents and children alike. Our findings contribute to the existing literature on the postpartum experiences of first-time fathers in Malaysia. Intrapersonal and interpersonal factors have influenced the development of fatherhood identity. Cultural practices of fatherhood involving extended families and fathers' own perceptions of their roles shape their actual fathering behaviors. The findings of this study may guide mental health professionals, particularly counsellors to better understand fathers' needs and experiences in order to promote better postpartum support and care for fathers.

Acknowledgment

The author extends significant gratitude to the cohort of new fathers who participated in this study. Their willingness to share personal and often intimate details of their postpartum experiences has greatly enriched the research. Special thanks are due to each participant for their invaluable contributions, which have significantly shaped both the scope and depth of this investigation. Their perspectives have provided essential data and have been instrumental in advancing the understanding of new fathers' roles during the postpartum period.

Declaration of Potential conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The study was conducted independently and without any financial support or relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest

References

- Baldwin, S., Malone, M., Sandall, J., & Bick, D. (2019). A qualitative exploratory study of UK first-time fathers' experiences, mental health and wellbeing needs during their transition to fatherhood. *BMJ OPEN*, 9(9).
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Castillo, J., Welch, G., & Sarver, C. (2011). Fathering: The relationship between fathers'

- residence, fathers' sociodemographic characteristics, and father involvement. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 15, 1342–1349.
- Chavis, A. T. (2022). Paternal perinatal depression in modern-day fatherhood. *Pediatrics in Review*, 43(10), 539–548.
- Cohen, M. Z., Phillips, J. M., & Palos, G. (2001). Qualitative research with diverse populations. *Seminars in Oncology Nursing*, 17(3), 190–196.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130.
- Deave, T., & Johnson, D. (2008). The transition to parenthood: what does it mean for fathers? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 63(6), 626–633.
- Ertekin Pinar, S., & Ozbek, H. (2022). Paternal depression and attachment levels of first-time fathers in Turkey. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 58(3), 1082–1088.
- Flick, U. (2022). *An introduction to qualitative research*.
- Fonseca, G., da Cruz, R., Arsénio, J., Portugal, A., & Crespo, C. (2023). Becoming a Father During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Experiences of Men in the Transition to Fatherhood. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 31(3), 351–370.
- Goodman, J. H. (2004). Paternal postpartum depression, its relationship to maternal postpartum depression, and implications for family health. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 45(1), 26–35.
- Gross, C. L., & Marcussen, K. (2017). Postpartum depression in mothers and fathers: The role of parenting efficacy expectations during the transition to parenthood. *Sex Roles*, 76, 290–305.
- Hamm, M., Miller, E., Jackson Foster, L., Browne, M., & Borrero, S. (2018). "The Financial Is the Main Issue, It's Not Even the Child": Exploring the Role of Finances in Men's Concepts of Fatherhood and Fertility Intention. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 12(4), 1074–1083.
- Hughes, C., Devine, R. T., Foley, S., Ribner, A. D., Mesman, J., & Blair, C. (2020). Couples becoming parents: Trajectories for psychological distress and buffering effects of social support. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 265, 372–380.
- Janghorban, R., Roudsari, R. L., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Skype interviewing: The new generation of online synchronous interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 9(1), 24152.
- Kim, H. N. (2018). Social support provision: perspective of fathers with preterm infants. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 39, 44–48.
- Lewington, L., Lee, J., & Sebar, B. (2021). "I'm not just a babysitter": Masculinity and men's experiences of first-time fatherhood. *Men and Masculinities*, 24(4), 571–589.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 533–544.
- Persson, E. K., Fridlund, B., Kvist, L. J., & Dykes, A.-K. (2012). Fathers' sense of security during the first postnatal week—A qualitative interview study in Sweden. *Midwifery*, 28(5), e697--e704.
- Rehel, E. M. (2014). When dad stays home too: Paternity leave, gender, and parenting. *Gender & Society*, 28(1), 110–132.
- Riggs, J. M. (1997). Mandates for mothers and fathers: Perceptions of breadwinners and care givers. *Sex Roles*, 37, 565–580.

- Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., & Fagan, J. (2020). The evolution of fathering research in the 21st century: Persistent challenges, new directions. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 82*(1), 175–197.
- Shorey, S., Dennis, C.-L., Bridge, S., Chong, Y. S., Holroyd, E., & He, H.-G. (2017). First-time fathers' postnatal experiences and support needs: A descriptive qualitative study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 73*(12), 2987–2996.
- Toye, F., Williamson, E., Williams, M. A., Fairbank, J., & Lamb, S. E. (2016). What value can qualitative research add to quantitative research design? An example from an adolescent idiopathic scoliosis trial feasibility study. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1838–1850.
- Vidaurreta, M., Lopez-Dicastillo, O., Serrano-Monzó, I., Belintxon, M., Bermejo-Martins, E., & Mujika, A. (2022). Placing myself in a new normalized life: The process of becoming a first-time father. A grounded theory study. *Nursing & Health Sciences, 24*(1), 152–162.
- Walsh, J. (2010). Definitions matter: if maternal--fetal relationships are not attachment, what are they? *Archives of Women's Mental Health, 13*, 449–451.